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7 January 1959

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

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USSR-Iraq: A delegation of Soviet experts has arrived in Baghdad to discuss Soviet-Iraqi economic and technical cooperation. Most members of the Sino-Soviet bloc have already concluded trade agreements with Iraq, and the Soviet Union has in addition previously concluded a [redacted] deal with Baghdad. [redacted]

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Belgian Congo: The rioting at Leopoldville, which entered its third day on 6 January, springs largely from the [Congo's underlying racial tensions and growing African nationalism. Some 20,000 Africans are estimated to have participated.] The new policy toward dependent areas which Belgium plans to make public on 13 January may temporarily ease the present explosive situation, but is not likely to satisfy independence-seeking African nationalists.

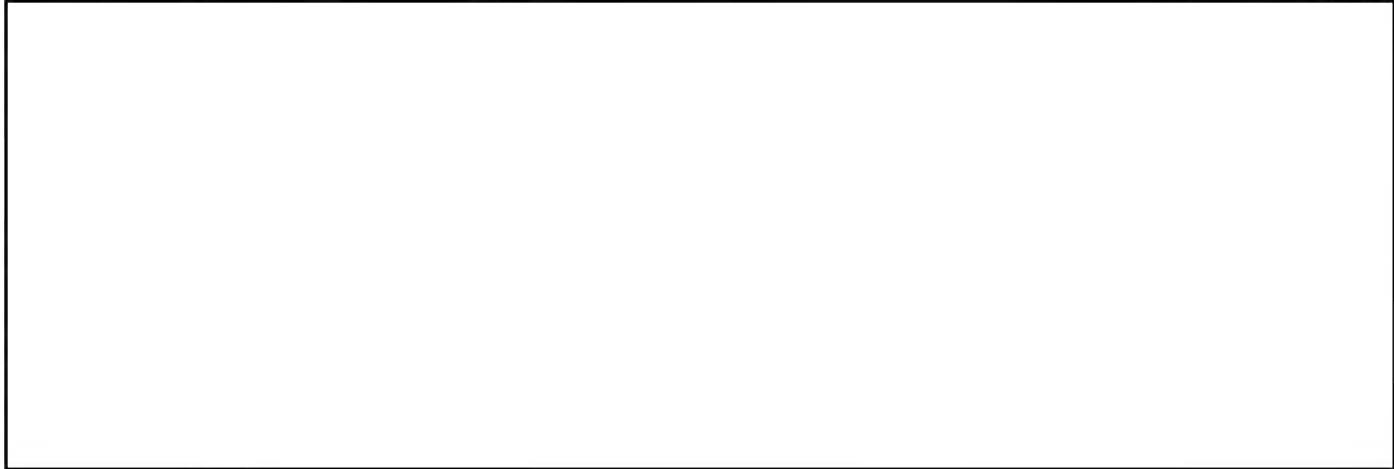
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III. THE WEST

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Cuba: Provisional President Manuel Urrutia has announced additional appointments to his cabinet, including Prime Minister Jose Miro Cardona, a widely known and highly respected former dean of the Havana Bar Association. As a gesture of "national unity," some cabinet positions will be offered to non-Castro groups which opposed Batista. Urrutia has also announced that he will dissolve Congress and the criminal courts, and rule by decree until general elections are held in 18 to 24 months. Several countries have already recognized the new government, and others have indicated they intend to follow suit.

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Soviet Economic Aid to Iraq

A delegation of Soviet experts has arrived in Baghdad, according to a TASS report of 6 January, to discuss Soviet-Iraqi economic and technical cooperation with officials of the Iraqi Government. TASS did not specify what authority the delegation has to commit the Soviet Union to providing economic aid to Iraq, but the delegation is likely to offer at least economic assistance, probably in the form of a line of credit.

Since the formation of the new Iraqi Government, the bloc has made a concentrated effort to develop economic as well as political relations with Baghdad to underscore the bloc's endorsement of the new regime. Most of the members of the Sino-Soviet bloc have signed trade agreements with Iraq. The Soviet Union has already concluded a [redacted] deal and has delivered three shiploads of military equipment to Iraq.

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While the articles of the Soviet-Iraqi trade agreement concluded on 11 November reportedly provide for "close cooperation between the two countries in various fields," they do not provide for an extension of Soviet credits. Soviet Ambassador Zaytsev, however, has stated publicly that the Soviet Union is willing to provide technical assistance.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Riots in the Belgian Congo

Rioting at Leopoldville, capital city of the Belgian Congo, entered its third day on 6 January. This development is symptomatic of the Congo's underlying racial tensions and growing African nationalism. Unemployment, which may total 50,000 among the city's African population, is also a contributing cause. The Congo has been considered a quiet, well administered colony, but there have been increasing signs of nationalism. Africans have shown a growing assertiveness in speeches and publications, and there has been increasing African agitation in the mineral-rich Katanga area.

[The rioting began after police acted to break up an African political meeting. It quickly developed into mob attacks by some 20,000 Africans on Europeans and private property. There were over 100 African and European casualties, including at least 30 African deaths. The Belgian authorities declared a state of emergency, reinforced security forces to a strength of 5,000 men, and flew in paratroopers. The European-led African troops remained loyal.]

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The present explosive situation is likely to persist to at least 13 January when Brussels plans to make public a new policy statement regarding dependent areas. This new policy, however, will probably not satisfy the independence-seeking African nationalists, and there may be further disorders in the future.

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III. THE WEST

The Situation in Cuba

Cuban Provisional President Urrutia has announced additional appointments to his cabinet which strengthen his government and may improve the prospects for political stability. Foremost among the new appointees is Prime Minister Jose Miro Cardona. An internationally known lawyer, Miro became dean of the Havana Bar Association in 1952. Beginning in 1955 he became identified with groups which attempted to bring a peaceful solution to Cuba's political problems, but in mid-1958 he turned anti-Batista and left the country. At the meeting of Cuban opposition groups in Caracas in late July 1958, Miro was chosen head of the "civic revolutionary front," which joined the signatory groups in a concerted effort against Batista and recognized Urrutia as 'provisional president-in-arms.'

Urrutia has indicated that some cabinet positions will be offered to followers of former President Carlos Prio Socarras and to members of the Revolutionary Directorate. Such a gesture of "national unity" would be intended to forestall any further demonstrations of disunity such as occurred on 5 January when members of the Revolutionary Directorate temporarily prevented Urrutia from entering the presidential palace.

Urrutia has announced that general elections will be held within 18 to 24 months. Until then, the government will rule by decree since Congress has been dissolved.

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